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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9279
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2185
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5653
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 9253
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6832
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 4634
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2629
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000471

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: NLD UNCLES SUPPORT SECRETARY'S MESSAGE TO
GOB

REF: A. RANGOON 470

[1](#)B. RANGOON 367

Classified By: P/E Chief Jennifer Harhigh for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) During a July 27 exchange with members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) Central Executive Committee (CEC), aka the "Uncles," the Charge solicited the Uncles' feedback on Secretary Clinton's message to the GOB in Phuket. The assembled Uncles (minus Win Tin and Aung Shwe for health reasons) all appeared to support the Secretary's message to the GOB that unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) would bring an appropriate U.S. response. They welcomed the Charge's assurance that the U.S. continues to believe the release of all political prisoners and commencement of genuine dialogue are other important steps for which the U.S. could offer additional carrots. The CDA noted he continues to attempt to pass the Uncles' latest message regarding dialogue to Liaison Minister Aung Kyi, who lately has not made himself available. The Uncles all appeared to be positively aware of that initiative. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) At Charge's request, the Uncles gathered July 27 at NLD Headquarters to discuss the comments Secretary Clinton made regarding Burma on the margins of the ASEAN Regional Forum and Post-Ministerial Conference in Phuket. Neither Win Tin, still suffering from heart trouble, nor ailing Chairman Aung Shwe were present. The Charge opened the meeting by noting he had attended that morning's session of the ASSK trial (Ref A).

Uncles Supportive of U.S. Efforts to Secure ASSK Release...

[1](#)3. (C) The Charge repeated Secretary Clinton's public comments on Burma, and confirmed that a similar message had been passed privately in Phuket at the MOFA Director General level. Charge emphasized that the release of ASSK and any subsequent U.S. response would be only a first step. The U.S. would continue to press for the regime to release all political prisoners and begin an inclusive dialogue among all

key parties about the political future of Burma. The Charge asked about CEC Member Win Tin's comments, published by the exile-based Irrawaddy, in which he reportedly criticized the U.S. approach as placing too much emphasis on ASSK and not enough on release of all political prisoners and the need for broad-based dialogue.

¶4. (C) Nyunt Wai quickly dismissed Win Tin's comments, referring to him as a "bohemian journalist" and adding that "not everything he says flows from this table..." Nyunt Wai and the other Uncles agreed that the U.S. move demonstrates the importance of ASSK's freedom and they accepted that the U.S. would continue to push the regime for release of all prisoners and genuine dialogue.

...But Continue to Insist on Constitutional Review

¶5. (C) Uncles Soe Myint and Than Tun reminded the CDA the NLD is demanding the regime review the constitution. As they told UN Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari and UN SYG Ban Ki-moon, party leaders cannot accept the current constitution, which enshrines military rule, nor elections if they are based on the flawed constitution. The Uncles asked what the U.S. position on the elections is likely to be. CDA observed that parties in Burma ought to be the ones to work through this issue. Thus, a dialogue between the opposition and the regime is the first step.

Uncles Still Hoping for Dialogue with Regime

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¶6. (C) The CDA said Labor/Liaison Minister Aung Kyi has been consistently "unavailable" lately, either in person or by phone, when the CDA has attempted to pass the NLD CEC's latest message confirming its interest in commencing unconditional dialogue (Ref B). Khin Maung Swe thanked CDA for ongoing efforts to communicate with the regime and said he currently is not using other channels to attempt to reach the regime. (Note: The other Uncles present appeared well aware of the context. End note.) Charge encouraged Khin Maung Swe and the others to pursue all means possible to pass their message to Nay Pyi Taw.

Grateful for U.S. support in UN

¶7. (C) The Uncles expressed thanks for continuing USG support in the UN, and they seemed optimistic about the role of Ban Ki-moon, observing that his life experience (growing up in an authoritarian Korea) gives him insight into Burma's plight. When several Uncles expressed hope the UNSC would take action on Burma, the CDA observed that veto-wielding members of the UNSC complicate such approaches.

Burma Following in the Steps of North Korea?

¶8. (C) The Uncles expressed concern about reports the regime is pursuing nuclear capabilities via North Korea and thus could pose a regional threat. The CDA noted the Secretary's comments in Phuket and the rigorous sanctions regime the UNSC has imposed on North Korea, adding that even the GOB is saying it understands it needs to help enforce UNSC 1874. The U.S. has no desire for Burma to become a nuclear power.

Aung Shwe and Win Tin: Health Woes Continue

¶9. (C) Separately, NLD MP-elect and former political prisoner Dr. Than Nyein told us NLD Chairman Aung Shwe, in his nineties, ailing, and house-bound, has delegated his authority in the CEC to Win Tin and Than Tun. He added that

Win Tin's heart problem appears to be serious, leaving Than Tun effectively in charge. (Note: The dialogue message the CEC asked the CDA to convey to the regime identified Than Tun, Khin Maung Swe, and a party lawyer as the initial interlocutors selected by Aung Shwe and blessed by ASSK. End note.)

Comment

¶10. (C) Our session with the Uncles was useful. We are confident that, despite Win Tin's public comments, the NLD leadership supports the initial USG overture to the Burmese encouraging the unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi. They appreciated the CDA's reassurances that the USG is very realistic about strategies and prospects and that U.S. support for a democratic future in Burma is unwavering. We were heartened to see the other Uncles appearing knowledgeable and supportive of Khin Maung Swe's efforts to pass a message to the regime regarding the party's willingness to engage in unconditional dialogue (Ref B).
DINGER